

Can't be a fox without the long ears [English]

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< I'll tell ya, there's more to a fox than just a pair of long ears!

The day has finally come.

Or that's at least what the fox said as soon as she woke up, very early in the morning.

She had the quickest breakfast, then a

shower, and then she stormed out of the deer's restaurant.

She's actually nowhere to be seen now.

Only the bird is there, standing on top of the fountain in the center of the plaza.

'Stay here and don't let anyone take over the place, Mattier! I'll be right back!' she said. That was around an hour ago.

The bird looks up at the sky and then lets out a sound quite similar to a sigh, probably carrying the same meaning too. It was 7AM when she left by herself, looking for god-knows-what. The bird had seen people come and go, but clearly no one was planning to 'take over' the plaza. Just who would do something like that? She had the only two guilds in the whole town in the palm of each one of her hands and so, Mattier was just bored. He would have certainly preferred to follow her wherever she needed to go.

"Chirp..."

But just when the little sparrow thought

it was a good idea to take a nap until his friend came back, the noises of hundred of steps made his feathers perk up.

"...?"

There was the fox coming, all triumphant and proud, followed by dozens of men carrying some heavy stuff. Men from many different races. There are elves, there are a lot of humans, a couple of lizardmen too...

The bird could only watch...

"Alright, place the wooden platforms behind the fountain. No, not there. Yes, just there. Make... something like a staircase with them... just make sure it ends up being really tall! I should be able to watch over the whole area from the top!"

The sparrow left his post and flied right onto the shoulder of Laeyd.

"Oh hey, Mattier! You see this? These guys I hired are gonna get the whole place ready for the big concert! Don't worry, they are neutral!"

She giggles cutely at the bird and sits on the edge of the fountain, dangling her legs looking certainly excited about what's to come.

"Ah... finally, all this damn mess is going to end. Well, that's what I'd like to think, anyway. There's a big chance this is not going to end the way I want it to. What do you think, Mattier? Am I being too optimistic? I know I'm hoping for some fairytalelike ending, but I really think I can pull it off this time. I think I did everything fine, I didn't make any enemies, and there's no one to hate me, at least in this city..."

"Chirp..."

"Hey, Mattier..."

"Chr?"

"What do you think he would say about this?"

"Chirp..."

"Yeah... yeah, that was a dumb question. I-I mean it was so long ago you weren't even born the last time I saw him."

"... chirp... chirp, chirp."

"Yeah? Only based on what I have told you about him?"

"Chirp."

"... haha, maybe one day we'll get to know."

"Chirp!"

"Yes! I'll tell him everything! All about our travels and-!"

The noise of a metal pipe bouncing on the ground called for the fox attention, at which she jumped up in order to go and yell at the careless worker.

Everything was working as intended. Before they could realize, a tall platform had been set in the middle of the plaza.

The workers could see the agile fox jumping skillfully to the top, where she was handed a microphone and a bottle of water.

"And now... all we have to do is wait..."

The workers leave soon enough after placing big speakers all around the place, and she waves goodbye to all of them. Apparently she had already paid them their fair share. Once all of them are gone, the fox's gesture turns a bit darker.

"... please, let it work just fine..."

She wears on her smile once she can see the sparrow come to her and lay on top of her hat.

"Chirp."

"I agree."

A couple of hours pass by, the few

clouds up on the sky dance from east to west as the fox watches. She asks herself if the wind is really that strong up there. She also asks the sparrow, but he says he has never really flied that high, so he can't really know. She doesn't feel too comfortable with that answer; he's a bird, all bird should be able to go as high as they please, even grazing the sun without getting burnt. That what she wants to do, to fly wherever she wants, far from home and close to the nothingness, meeting new people, new places and new feelings.

No one will stop her. She wouldn't let anyone do it, she loves and embraces her freedom, her forcefully gained freedom that allowed her to be finally happy.

She knows herself too well, she knows about her own perks and weaknesses, and her good and bad sides too, and she's happy with those, since that's was being oneself truly means. At least for her.

A voice takes her down to the earth, and she glances below the platform to find an elf looking up at her. Laeyd's gesture looks

as calm as lazy, and the smile on her face shows a faint shade of pure bliss.

"We are all ready here, Laeyd."

She blinks and greets Ponit with that cheeky smirk of hers, pointing to the left side of the plaza.

"My friends the Stompers are here! Good, good! Just in time, now please place yourself in your positions... by that side of the town center; your side. Are you ready guys? Have you practiced as I instructed you? I'll take no halfwit performances, you hear me?"

"Of course the guys practiced, and they did it so much they are not that well slept. Unlike myself, they at least trust you that much."

"Great! You should learn a bit from them, point-eared-ponit."

"Huh?! In the end you're nothing but a b-"

"I, too, have confidence in Layed's plan."

The old throat of the Tall, the mouse, interrupts Ponit's phrase. The tiny animal jumps out of the pocket and stands atop the elf's shoulder.

"Moreso, if this really accounts for a definitive victory from the Stompers, we will be in forever debt with Layed, and so I assume she's the most interested in the success of her own idea."

"Yes! Ah, I really like that mouse~ anyway, get on your side. Mattier, can you take a peek to the other side?"

The Stompers set themselves up as indicated. Line after line of humans, beasts, lizards and even some demons holding all kinds of musical instruments, ready and willing to tumble down their opponents once and for all, giving no chance of retaliation: the definitive strike that will forever put an end to an unending war.

"Chirp!"

The bird comes back and yells in the fox's human ear.

"It's time..."

But the good mood and winning stance of most Stompers' member slowly fades off as some people gathers at the other side of the plaza. They are strong-looking too, and they all hold instruments, just as them. They form a line, and then another, and then another, and no one dares to speak a word, not even Laeyd. From between two buffed bear-eared bodyguards, a little boy walks out and looks up at the fox standing on top of that five-meters-tall platform.

"T-the Winders are ready, Laeyd. But..."

Merid's voice breaks the silence, and he gazes down to the elf and the mouse just

some steps away from him.

"Laeyd, what is..."

"What is the meaning of this, fox?!"

The elf snaps and yells at the mastermind, followed by the jeer, insults and threatening of all the Stompers. They have realized they were cheated on, and even some of them drop their instrument to pull out their weapons.

She, however, remains calm, looking down at the raging guild and then at the bosses of both sides.

"Laeyd, I would certainly appreciate an explanation."

The only other person that looks as calm as her is Tall.

"Right now... this is what you both wanted! A chance, right?! A chance to prove you are the best! Both of you! But

you could have never done so without my guide! And so please-!"

Clanck.

Laeyd stops talking when she hears and sees a small but heavy looking knife being throw right at her feet, almost touching her right foot and stabbing the platform. She goes a bit pale and looks at the Winders' side as if trying to see who threw that. They start booing, yelling and getting ready to fight too. The tension is at its maximum point, and both bosses just gaze at the crowds knowing they will not be able to stop such conmotion.

"H-hey..."

A drop of sweat runs down from the fox's cheek, and she and the bird look at each other with a worried face, unsure of how to procede.

"I-I didn't... please, just let me speak and..."

Merid takes a hand to his chin and groans quietly.

"I... we have to get out of here. There's no stopping them now, a fight is going to break out any second now, and we have no chance of survival here in the middle."

"No! Wait!"

As Laeyd lifts her voice, the crowds scream even louder, she will definitely not be heard by them anymore, not even through the microphone.

A battle is about to begin, and as agile as she is there is just no way to flee unarmed from the scene, much less if she's the one being targeted.

Her lips tremble, her throat feels packed, and just when she's about to jump off and try to escape, a single, acute and loud knock noise roars through the air. It's such an imponent sound that everyone goes instantly quiet, as if they recognize its origin. The significance of such event

almost makes one feel as if the very knock made the wind go quiet too.

"Ah!"

"That is..."

Merid and Tall both look at the building behind Laeyd. A simple restaurant with nothing relevant to note, except for the old woman standing at the door, with a broom on her right hand and the wooden end of it on the ground, being the origin of the silently deafening noise.

"Urdizina?!"

The fox snaps back to reality as the deer lady gazes up at her with a neutral expression.

"I don't know what you're trying to pull out here, youngling. But you better get ready to face the consequences of your own actions."

No one dares to speak a word in front of the deer lady. Not even the old mouse, or the combative elf.

"Y-yes! Of course! I'm sure of what I want to do!"

"Well then..."

The owner of the restaurant in the neutral zone of the town gazes slowly at both sides.

"Then I'm positive all of us will listen to this vixen and follow her instructions. Is that right?"

And then she looks at the heads of each guild.

"Is that right, Merid and Tall?"

"Y-yes."

"Absolutely, Urdizina."

"Wonderful. Laeyd, go on. The floor is

yours."

Standing in awe at the mysterious display of power of the deer lady, she nods just once and talks to the microphone, taking out a short wooden stick from inside her jacket.

"A-alright, everyone! Just as we practiced! All you have to do is follow my pace..."

"... chirp."

"Y-yes, here goes nothing..."

She raises her stick up in the air, and quickly moves it down, allowing the concert to start.

Her plan is innocent, and certainly fairytalelike, but she's completely confident in it. Maybe this is because she's also nothing but an innocent girl under that cheeky attitude and her bias to get herself in trouble.

But she thinks she did fine.

As she moves the stick to a side, the Winders play a note on their guitars, while the Stompers make their trumpets cry; moving it to the other side and the Stompers hit their drums as some Winders blow their harmonicas.

And so, with every hit on the tempo, both guilds complement each other's sound, making it impossible for one to feel complete without the other.

Her idea was not to make them both play the same tune but strengthened by the amount of instruments, but to teach each one a certain part of the same song, a song they could only fully play if they get along and choose not to fight each other, even if for just a couple of minutes.

The nervousness in the fox's eye slowly vanishes, and a content smile is born amidst the armonious show. She's doing nothing but waving a stick, yet the results of her teachings on the men and women of each side shows off by themselves.

As for the bystanders, all of them look in awe. This is not the usual chaos they listen

to every week. This is a proper, beautiful and well thought play that all of them can enjoy. Ponit stays the same as always, Tall nods wisely and Merid watches impressed as the kid he is, and the three of them move to the side of Urdizina. As for the deer lady, she smiles up proudly at the vixen on top of the platform, who waves her tail at the same tempo she waves the stick.

A solid five minutes go by until the last cry of the trumpets puts an end to the song.

Laeyd gazes down at every single citizen before she turns around to face the very same people he lied to and yells.

"I told ya I'd pull it off!"

With such warcry, and a glorious chirp from the bird on top of her head, she raises her arms and all the musicians behind her cheer in unison.

The mouse claps calmly, just as the deer.

"Astounding."

"So this was your plan all along, Laeyd?
You really are a fox, aren't you?"

"What?"

Without even making a noise, she jumps off the platform and stands in front of them all with her hands inside her pockets.

"Did ya doubt it?! I'll tell ya, there's more to a fox than just a pair of long ears!"

"Now you should tell me how should I make all those men stay each one in their respective guild."

"Y-yeah I don't think... I don't think they'll want to play alone again after this..."

The bosses acknowledge their defeat, and Laeyd simply laughs, but Urdizina intervenes with the same calm face she once met Laeyd with.

"I don't know if this will be enough to make all the stupid fighting stop, but it will surely calm things down a lot."

"Yes, that is for sure."

"Yeah, we... we could maybe think of making a truce of sorts..."

"We'll have an audience next month." The mouse states. "We will decide what to do then. For now, every hostility from the Stompers against the Winders is strictly forbidden, until we solve this matter at least. Is that fine for you, young Merid?"

"Yeah, it is. I'll also call for a cease in any hostility coming from our side. Is Laeyd also coming to the audience?"

"Of course she is, she caused all of this after all."

"Of course I'm not."

Everyone cocks an eyebrow at the fox.

"I'm just a traveler, nothing else. And I think I've already done enough here, I'll be taking my leave very soon."

"Hm... yes, as it should be."

The deer settles the matter with her words, and the sparrow chirps proudly one last time.

...

"Are you not even staying here for the night, Laeyd?"

"Nah, I'm fine. I did everything I wanted to do here. I hope I helped fixed a couple things, even if just for a short while."

"I will not let your efforts go to waste, don't worry. If negotiations runs fine, this town is about to get as peaceful as it has never been."

"I'm glad, old lady. Hm!"

And she carries her bag on her back, fixing the strap along her chest.

"Well then, I'm leaving. I'll come back

someday, you better still be around here by then, deer!"

"Haha~ I'll surely be here, fox. Have care."

"Goodbye!"

Waving goodbye to that old lady she'll maybe never see again, Laeyd walks out to the dark streets of the town at night, quickly leaving it behind as she heads for the road in the north.

Looking up at the moon above her head, she hums the song she composed for the guilds, happily.

"Ah... man, I can't believe it worked so well."

"Chirp."

"Do you think things will get better for them? I thought it would be as easy as making them play the song, but it seems a lot of negotiations are still needed."

"Chirp, chirp."

"Well, yes, there's surely a lot of conflicts

between them I'm not aware of, but I'll leave that to them. I... I already did my part. In fact, I think I did more than enough! If they don't settle their differences after this, well then they're just unfixable."

"Chirp?"

"It's not that, I just mean I wouldn't put much more of myself to solve a helpless issue. If I'm putting myself on the line, at least I want to know it's worth for something, you know? Jeez, I'm not asking them to hold their hands like best friends or something, I'd just feel alright if they stopped being at each other's throats."

"Chirp..."

And the fox leaves the town, leaving behind the trace of a good action that, unknown to her, will immensely benefit the lives of everyone living in that place. She did something good. She helped a lot of people.

Do you get it now? Do you get what I meant straight from the beginning? Foxes

are not evil, they are just tricky, wise and sneaky. But this one, this one is a good hearted fox.

"... chirp?"

"Oh, what are we going to do next?"

"Chirp."

"Well the last part of the plan, of course!"

Hm...

"Chirp!"

"Yes! We're going to the next town to sell info about how it's now safe to visit that town! I'm sure a lot of merchants will pay quite good for being the first ones to get the sell their products there! Haha~! We're gonna be making a lot of money! And we could sell the same info to the following town too, and the next one too! And so on until the rumor is too strong and it's no news anymore! One way or another, we'll be the ones most benefited

from it. So let us go~!"

I take back my silly words.

What a vixen.

Fin.

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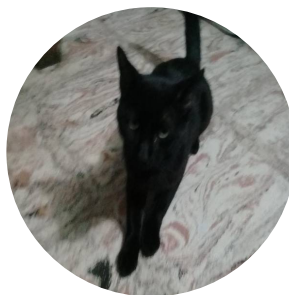


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The ending pf this chapter couldn't be better! 😊👍

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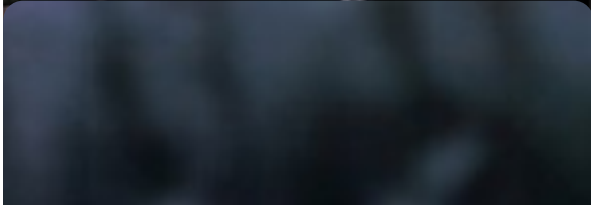
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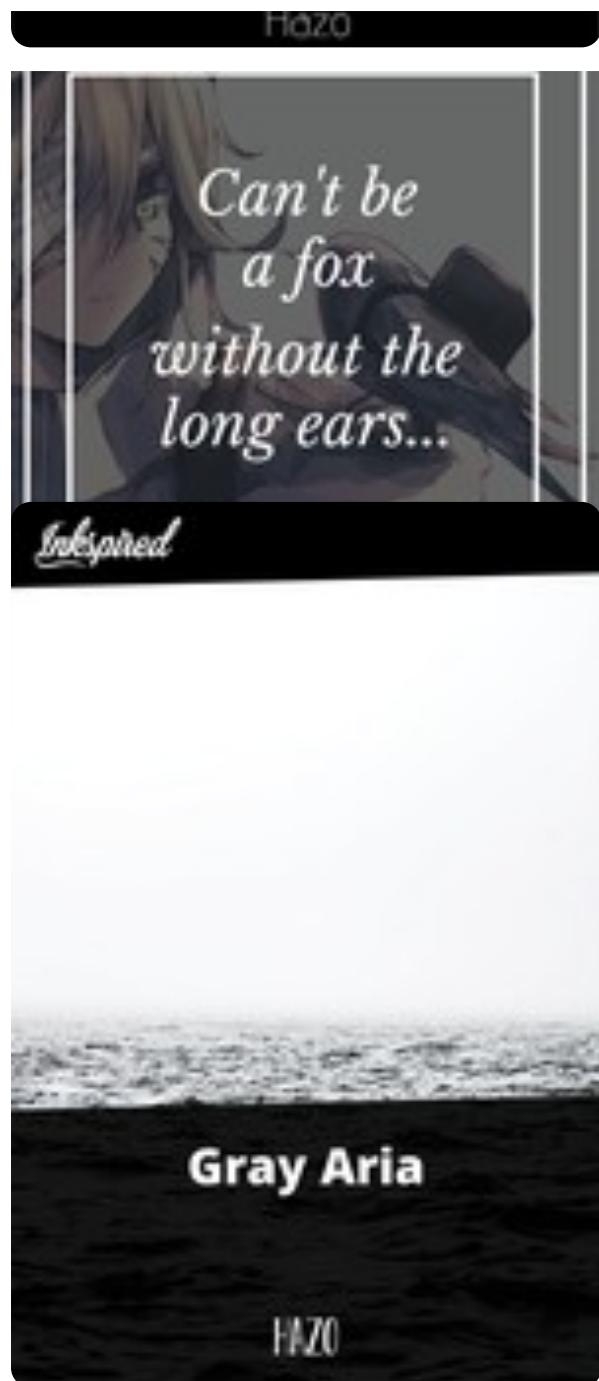
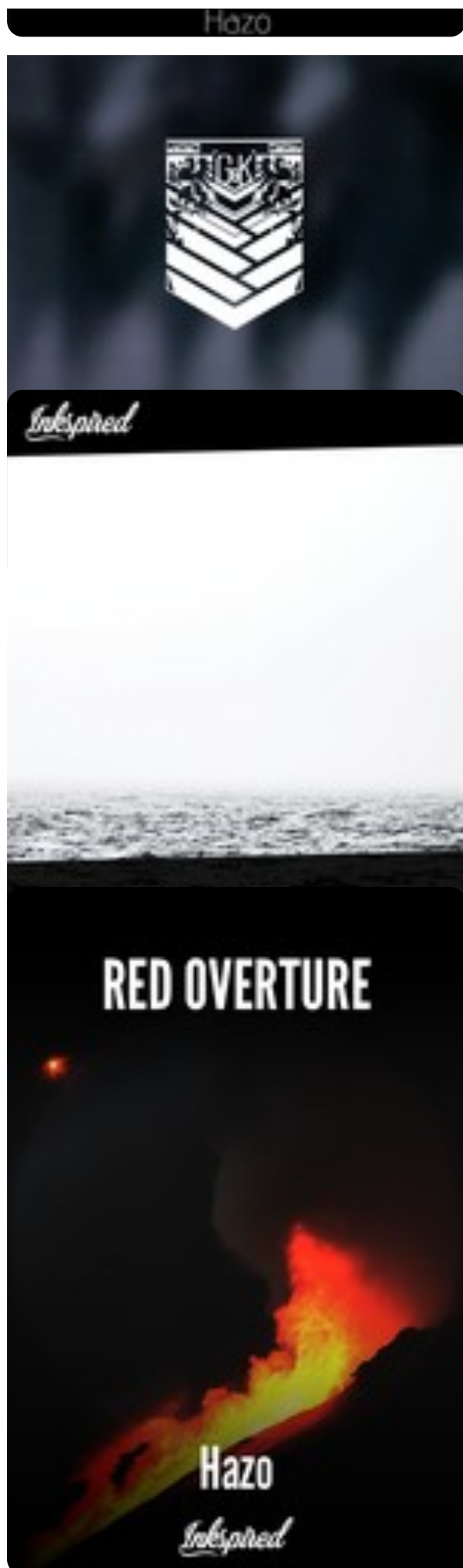
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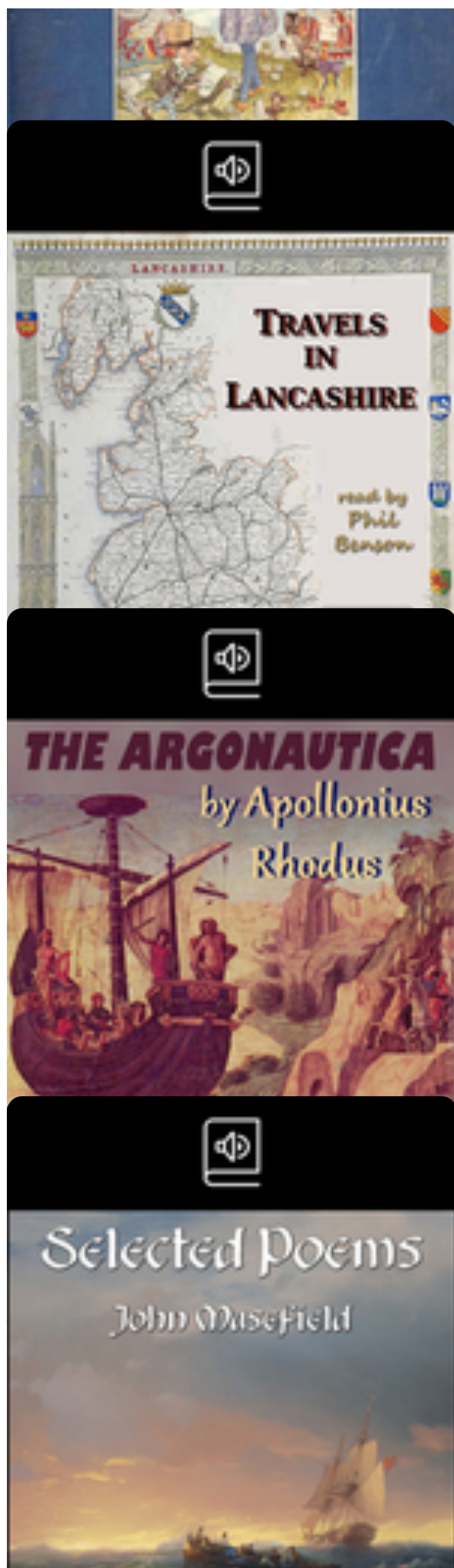
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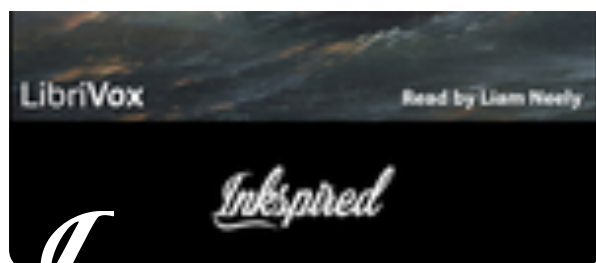
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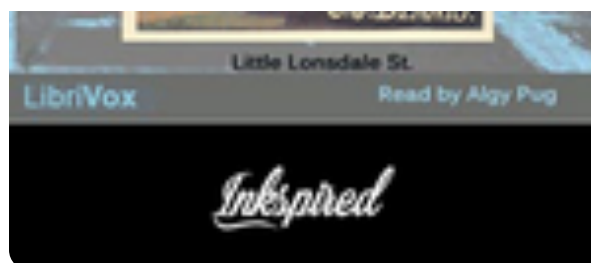


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